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Let's Make College Happen: Para Adelante el Futuro  
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As first generation college students, we have experienced several obstacles that have made higher learning harder to achieve. In our project, we wanted to create awareness to motivate high school students to continue their education, especially undocumented students. We are very passionate about human rights and are strong believers in equal opportunity which is why we wanted to focus our project on education. We wanted to combine our passions and motivate those high school students who believe they do not have a chance or do not have the right tools or support to apply for college. One of our goals was to provide resources to high school students, giving them first hand advice from current first generation college students, and assisting them with seeking scholarship opportunities. Our plan was to create an open workshop at a high school and share our resources. We also planned on doing a family workshop so families can attend and learn about our survey results. Throughout our project, we encountered several hurdles. However, the results that we collected influenced us to create a video where we can share with high school programs. This video can be used as a resource for high school students and families in the future.

During Winter Term, we surveyed 50 college students at WOU to collect information on how they overcame barriers, and advice they wish to give to current high school students interested in continuing their education. Throughout our research we gathered our results and were able to narrow down three main obstacles: family support, financial support, and lack of knowledge on available resources. We also interviewed parents of high school students so we could learn how they supported their child thus far and what they would like to know to better support their student. My partner and I divided the interviews and worked together to gather the information that we found in our surveys and interviews and included it in a PowerPoint presentation.

The interviews that we did were so impactful because they shared emotional feelings about how they wish they could have supported their child even more and feeling regret for not spending more time with them. The students that we interviewed shared different barriers that they overcame and expressed how important it is to continue their education. Our goal was to film the interviews and create a presentation where we could then present to events where we could reach out to parents and their children who are unsure or a little intimidated about applying to college. We faced many difficulties during this process as many refused to participate in our film because they did not feel comfortable enough being filmed, or did not want to disclose their personal information. The whole idea of not being able to support their child was also embarrassing to some parents.

We started off thinking about the importance of education for the students, and decided to interview parents of high school students, parents of college students and the students as well. As we continued working on this goal, we discovered that we first needed to work with the parents of these students by informing them about struggles or obstacles their children may be facing so they could have a better idea on how to better support their student. We reached out to parents and students and interviewed them with similar questions. When we interviewed parents, they admitted that they were afraid to get involved with their children's school because they did not know English and did not feel comfortable reaching out to support their student. Most parents also spend their days working and are not able to give time to help or figure out resources. We wanted to film Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), college students, but they did not want to be filmed because they felt uncomfortable sharing immigration statuses. We wanted to respect the students so we did not include personal data in our video presentation.

Another difficulty we came across was reaching out to schools to present our project and informing community members. We worked together contacting high school students, but we had difficulty finding the right date so we could attend high schools. We tried to work together to create an event where families could attend, so we could show our presentation and video, but with our schedules we had to change the date several times. Through all our work and our goals, we have not been able to achieve our ultimate goal to reach out to communities, yet. We are still planning to create an event on campus so families can attend and we are currently scheduled to present our workshop at Oregon State University during their resource fair for family weekend.

Although it was a complex project to complete, because people did not seem willing to participate in our interviews, and finding schools that allowed us to present and use some time during their school days, we were still able to complete interviews and continue to work on our presentation. Personally this project has helped us realize the privilege we have, and has made us really appreciative. We have learned so much about the people who surround us and this project has allowed us to grow and be more aware of the thoughts that go through some parent's minds. We did not fully understand how tough this subject was for some parents to think about and reflect upon, until we found that they were hesitant to participate. Working through this problem we worked together to revise our questions and ensure we were not asking for unnecessary information, and made sure our interviewees approved and revised before filming.

We worked together throughout most of the tasks, aside from ones we assigned each other. We kept constant communication, because meeting with our busy schedules was always difficult. While we each had individual tasks to complete such as the creation of the videos, and the collection of data, we tried to both be present for as many interviews as possible. We both worked on the overall presentation and editing as well.

Our passion for equal opportunity has grown, and our drive to help others achieve greatness through education has also increased. After everything, we are greater believers that having obstacles, difficulties and language barriers should not be the reason we give up on our goals and as shown through our project and our participants, we will continue to work on our goal to help others and complete our mission to reach out to our communities. We hope that our video will be a good resource for programs so they can influence first generation students to continue their education and parents to be able to better support their children in their education. Overall, we want families to know they belong in every aspect of education and that the opportunities are out there to fulfil great futures with education.